August 2005

Massachusetts Parole Board

Parole E-News

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New Reentry Unit Hits Ground Running: Awards Contracts for Parolee Beds



The recently formed Reentry Unit of the Massachusetts Parole Board opened the doors to its office at the state transportation building in Boston on April 4. The six members of the unit are sharing office space with the Executive Office of Public Safety Programs Division. The new unit consists

Greetings!

Parole E-News is published from the Reentry Unit's administrative offices at 10 Park Plaza, Suite 3720, Contracts for Parolee Beds Boston, MA., 02116. This newsletter is an opportunity to share stories about the successes and challenges of reentry. It's also a vehicle for staying current on agency updates, statewide news, and national criminal justice issues that affect what we're doing right here. Anyone with a story idea or news they want to share with the agency may contact Anna Kivlan at 617-725-3317 or anna.kivlan@state.ma.us.

Chairman's Column



Welcome to the first of what will hopefully be many newsletters from the Massachusetts Parole Board.

As many of the parole staff are well aware, this agency has undergone significant change in the past few years.

The purpose of this newsletter is to explain and underscore the important, significant strides that the agency has made, as well as to recognize and celebrate our shared victories.

Full Article

of Reentry Director Kira Dunn, Director of Reemployment Dave Sullivan, Program Evaluator Stephanie Coughlin, Grant Manager Nelson Simao, Word Processing Operator Lynn Dutra, and Assistant Director of Reentry Anna Kivlan. The new unit will act as the administrative arm of the agency's reentry program, helping to manage the Parole Board's eight Regional Reentry Centers (RRC's) dotted throughout the state. Change is also afoot in the field. This summer, substance abuse coordinators joined each RRC/Parole Office to provide substance abuse and mental health counseling to exoffenders and parolees. The Responses (RFR) to community transitional housing with linkages to substance abuse and mental health treatment to parolees. The selected agencies will provide transitional beds and support services for exoffenders.

Quick Links...

- <u>Department of Correction</u>
 <u>Reentry Programs</u>
- Parole News Archive

Reach for the Stars: A New Model

By Tina M. Hurley

The Massachusetts Parole Board is developing a plan for enhancing the management of female offenders. The number of women under correctional supervision in the United States has reached over 1 million. This constitutes the fastest growing segment of the nation's prison population. Although incarcerated women are still the minority, the number is significant.

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throughout the state. Change is
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summer, substance abuse
coordinators joined each
RRC/Parole Office to provide
substance abuse and mental
health counseling to exoffenders and parolees. The
agency also issued a Request for
Responses (RFR) to community
programs interested in providing
throughout the state. Change is
offenders in the Commonwealth's state and county
prison facilities are classified as low risk, nonviolent offenders, making the female offender the
prime candidate to benefit from a highly structured
community-based reintegration program. Women
offenders have different pathways to crime than
male offenders, with less serious offense histories
and backgrounds. These key differences require a
different reintegration program. Support services
to assist these women in their rehabilitation and
transitional housing with
helplessness.

The Goal of the New Model:

- 1. Adopt an all-inclusive, gender-responsive approach for women offenders.
- 1. Develop a comprehensive, community-based service program to assist women with their transition from a locked penal facility back to the community.

Key Program Components

Ready Access Beds
 There is a shortage of residential beds in

- Affiliated Programs and Services
- Latest Updates

community correctional settings. We plan to put in place "ready access" community-based beds for women.

Referral Bank

A formal referral process will be established for institutional and field officers to obtain assistance with women offender issues.

 Evidence Based Risk Assessment and Interventions

All women released under parole supervision from MCI- Framingham will be assessed using the Level of Service Inventory tory review (LSI-R). A female offender's level and type of supervision will be determined based on the established risk/needs categories.

MassHealth

A MassHealth application will be completed for women leaving MCI Framingham. This will ensure that women can access and pay for treatment services and medication upon release.

Treatment and Graduated Sanctions System

This new graduated sanctions system will streamline the current revocation system, implementing more informal procedures designed specifically for women violators.

Discharge Planning
 Design and implement a discharge process for women to ensure their successful reentry.

Tina M. Hurley is a Parole Officer who works with women offenders across the state. She works out of the Quincy Parole Office/Reentry Center in Quincy. Next month, look for a feature on two female offenders Parole Officer Hurley has worked with.

Profile of an Ex- Drug Offender

There's nothing about Craig that hints at a troubled past. Because he seems like a regular, amiable guy, it's surprising to find out that he's spent the past 15 years locked up in state prison, serving a mandatory sentence for trafficking in cocaine.

As talkative and candid as he is, his childhood and family are topics that quiet him. The story of his family is sad is all he'll say, and then he'll change the subject.

The story he will share fills in slowly, beginning near his 30th birthday, when he was living in Boston and got into some trouble.

Although he said he never used cocaine- he barely even drank alcohol, he was arrested in 1980 for trafficking the drug. At age 30, he faced a sentence of half his adult life so far.

Craig changed during the long stretch of time he spent in prison. He transformed from someone who had trouble making commitments and holding a steady job to a highly motivated inmate. Instead of growing embittered, Craig took classes and got his barber's license.

He spent ten years sketching out a detailed business plan for a barbershop, beauty salon, and boutique. The dream of opening his own business kept him focused on the day he would win back his freedom.

Compared to some inmates, Craig was fortunate in small ways. While he doesn't discuss the details of his prison experience, he said he was released with a "clean bill of health." At age 45, he's not married and has no children. Unlike many discharged inmates, he has no child support to pay and no extra mouths to feed.

But while this independence makes some things easier, it also means that Craig is facing the enormous challenge of reentry largely on his own.

Fortunately, he has patched together a small network of people he can trust and rely on for help, starting with Cathy and Joe, reentry officers who began working for the agency's Regional Reentry Center in Quincy last October.

Ex-offenders who come through the Quincy center, one of eight in the state, are assisted with finding shelter, obtaining a driver's license, getting substance abuse and mental health counseling, finding employment, and getting basic needs met.

On the day of his release, Craig had immediate problems to deal with. It was February, and the warmest clothes he had were a flimsy jean jacket and sweater. One of the first things Cathy and Joe did was take him to St. Francis House, a Boston shelter, to get a winter jacket and something to eat.

Next, they helped him find a place to sleep at the Lemuel Shattuck shelter in Boston, where he has continued to stay. Cathy and Joe also helped Craig open a bank account at Sovereign Bank to deposit the money he saved while working in prison.

Getting a bank account is hard for discharged offenders whose only form of ID is from the prison. The same held true for Craig, who went to the bank with Cathy and Joe the first few days after his release only to be turned away due to lack of sufficient ID. As a result, he spent the first few weeks carrying his cash around. For safekeeping at night, Craig wrapped the money in a napkin and stuffed it down his pants.

Because he had gotten his barber's license, Craig

was lucky to land a job at a barbershop in a few weeks. Although he was behind the wall for more than a decade, Craig jumped into the 21st century, purchasing a cell phone, buying an MBTA bus and subway combo pass, and learning to navigate his way though Boston in the year 2005. Craig has put aside about \$300 after paying telephone bills, and buying food and clothes. While some things are coming easily to Craig, he says that reentry overall has been difficult and he often feels very alone. When he moves into his own apartment, finances will become tighter, making it difficult to hold onto his dream of opening a barbershop, beauty salon, and boutique. "I think anybody who has ever hit rock bottom, who really wants to elevate from where they are, will have to set goals and reach them one step at a time," he said.

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